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# THE PROBLEM OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY CITY.

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LEGISLATIVE enactment creates a "Greater New York." It has also been decreed by the laws of our social life that there are to be a greater Boston and Philadelphia, a greater Chicago and San Francisco. The city is to contain an ever-increasing proportion of the population and to constitute a factor of ever-increasing importance in the national life.

The accelerated rate of growth of the city in modern times is illustrated by New York. Settled in 1614, it took the city 175 years to gain the first 33,000 inhabitants. During the next 50 years it gained 280,000. During the next 30 years it gained 630,000; and during the next 21 years, which ended in 1890, it gained 859,000. In the last short period the gain was twenty-six times as great as during the first long period, and the rate of gain was 208 times greater. The census of 1890 showed that this metropolitan city contained a larger population than any one of twenty-eight great states of the Union.

In 1790 only three per cent. of our population was urban; in 1890, twenty-nine per cent. The number of the cities in the United States a hundred years ago was six; in 1880 there were 286; ten years later there were 443.

For a time it was supposed that this wonderful growth of cities in the New World was due to the exceptional conditions of a new civilization. But though London's history runs back many hundreds of years, four-fifths of her growth have been made during this century. It is found that in Europe, in Asia, and even in Africa, wherever the breath of nineteenth century civilization has been felt, it has breathed new life into cities.

This sudden concentration of population is often spoken of

as a congestion, and is believed by many to be abnormal and temporary. It has brought perplexing problems, as yet unsolved, which some have imagined would find their solution in a reaction of population toward the country. But no warrant for such an expectation is to be found in the causes of the city's recent growth. This movement of population from country to city, which is one of the most significant phenomena of modern times, is due primarily to three causes: (1.) The application of machinery to agriculture, which enables four men to do the work formerly done by fourteen; (2.) the rise of manufactures in the cities, which attracts the men released from the farms, and (3.) the railway, which not only makes the transfer of population easy, but, which is more important, makes it possible to feed a massed population, no matter how vast.

There is a gregarious instinct in men, which has always made the city as large as it could well be; and these three causes have liberated and emphasized this instinct during this century. As this instinct and these causes are all permanent, it is obvious that this tendency will prove permanent.

Some have imagined that the pressure upon the city might be relieved and the miseries of the slum modified by removing families to unoccupied lands and teaching them to engage in agriculture, and steps have been taken in this direction. But those who expect to solve or even to simplify the problem by this method fail to appreciate the profound change which has come over the world's industry during this century, by which it has ceased to be individual and has become organized; a change which is destined to exert more influence on material conditions and on the social, intellectual, moral, and spiritual life of man than did the discovery of America, the invention of gunpowder or the art of printing. Doubtless this transition is the most important material change which has ever taken place in the history of the race. It has separated as by an impassable gulf the simple, homespun, individualistic life of the world's past from the complex, closely associated life of the present and of the world's future.

In the age of homespun, which, for most of our population, reached well on toward the middle of this century, the typical farmer could not only till his own soil, but build his own house, make his own furniture, and many of his own tools. His wife

could take the wool as it came from the sheep's back, dye, cord, spin and weave it, and then make it into a coat for her husband. That is, they could together do in a rough way work which now represents ten or a dozen trades. Their wants were simple, and most of them they could supply with their own hands. Such a couple could have raised a family in comparative comfort, if they had been alone on the continent. They were practically independent of the whole world.

The organization of industry has changed all this. In it was involved the division of labor. The work of one trade was divided between a dozen or twenty machines, each fed by a different man and each dependent on all the others. Moreover, great branches of industry have become linked together in a kind of endless chain of interdependence, so that one link cannot move far unless the other links move with it.

There has resulted a manifold multiplication of the products of labor, which has powerfully stimulated wants and greatly elevated the standard of living ; and, further, we have become dependent on well nigh all the world.

Poets have sung the independence of the farmer, but that independence forever ceased with the transition from the age of homespun to that of the division and organization of labor ; and this fact has a most significant bearing on the future growth of cities. When the farmer could directly provide for himself the necessities of life and patronized the tradesmen for little more than its luxuries, the number of farmers might have been indefinitely multiplied so long as unoccupied land remained ; and if we could reverse the motion of the earth and roll it back into the age of homespun, we might relieve the pressure upon the city by planting families on unoccupied land ; but with the division of labor this became impossible. The farmer can now do but one thing, and that is to farm. He can supply the many wants of his family only by turning his produce into money, which means that he must farm for the market. This fact makes him dependent on the demand and supply of the world. Now it should be observed that the world's demand for food must necessarily be limited and that the food supply to-day is equal to the demands of the civilized world to-day. It is true there is want even to starvation, but that is due to the lack of distribution, not to any lack of production. There are already more persons engaged in

farming than are needed, with the improved agricultural implements of recent years, to supply the world's demands for food, and that accounts for the general depression of agriculture in Europe and America during recent years.

If we could transfer 100,000 families from our crowded cities to unoccupied land, and so train them as to make them successful farmers, the world would not consume any more food to accommodate them. They could succeed only by getting the market, and they could get the market only by driving 100,000 other farmers out of it, which would mean driving them off the farm and into the city.

Again, efforts are being made to relieve agriculture by improving its methods. It is said, "If men farm with their brains, they will make money, and then they will remain on the farm." By all means let us make farming intelligent. Indeed, if we do not, we shall lose much of our hold on the European market. We have been able to command that market by reason of our cheap virgin soil, notwithstanding our wasteful methods. But American competition, after first causing great depression, has at length created a remarkable agricultural revival in Europe. Governments have afforded powerful aid through the Departments or Ministries of Agriculture. Subsidies have been granted, prizes offered, agricultural academies and colleges founded, and free lecture courses established. By every means the people are being instructed and encouraged; and their new activity is manifested in the co-operative agricultural societies which are rapidly multiplying on the Continent. Some 6,500 such societies have been formed in France and 7,200 in Prussia. It is said that in Denmark there is now a co-operative dairy in every parish.

Our American agriculture must certainly be more intelligent if it is to retain its markets, but the attempt to stop the exodus from the country by better farming will prove worse than futile. Intelligent farming succeeds because a given amount of effort when intelligently directed produces greater results. Inasmuch, then, as the amount of food which the world can consume is limited, the more intelligent the farming is the smaller will be the number of farmers required to produce the needed supply; so that the more intelligent farming becomes the larger will be the number of farmers driven from country to city.

Of course population will increase; but increased production

by reason of improved methods is likely to keep pace with it for many years to come. Good judges tell us that our present agricultural product could be doubled without any increase of acreage under cultivation, simply by reasonably good methods.

It has been pointed out that the world's demand for food is necessarily limited. This fact places a natural limit to the number of men who can successfully devote themselves to producing the food supply ; but there is no such natural and necessary limit to the world's consumption in other directions. In palaces and gardens, in furniture and equipages, in dress and ornaments, in paintings and statuary, the purse sets the only limit of expenditure. If the world were a thousand times as rich as it is, it could spend a thousand times as much as it does on such objects ; it could consume but little more food.

This harmonizes perfectly with what is known as Engel's economic law. Dr. Engel, formerly head of the Prussian Statistical Bureau, tells us that the percentage of outlay for subsistence grows smaller as the income grows larger ; that the percentage of outlay for rent, fuel, light, and clothing remains the same, or approximately the same, whatever the income ; and that the percentage of outlay for sundries becomes greater as income increases.

From all this it follows that, as population and wealth increase, an ever-enlarging proportion of men must get their living by means of the mechanical and the fine arts ; or, in other words, an ever-increasing proportion of population must live in cities.

Our free institutions are based on two fundamental principles, viz.: local self-government and federation. These are alike necessary ; the former to the exercise of our liberties, the latter to their preservation. The principle of federation was imperilled a generation ago, and the nation poured out blood and treasure to save it. To-day, South and North alike agree that this principle is to stand in its integrity.

But while patriotism was at the front defending the Union, the other fundamental principle was being quietly subverted at home. Selfish men gained control of municipal governments for personal ends. Conditions made it easy for the political boss to compact his power and to perfect his machine. The inevitable result was the development of bottomless corruption and un-

blushing outrage upon the rights and liberties of the people ; and, as a rule, the larger the city the more completely did it become boss-ridden.

Professor Bryce declares that the one conspicuous failure of American institutions is the government of our great cities, which every intelligent man knows to be true. The State limits the liberties of its cities. It does not dare to trust them with full autonomy. Thus one of our two fundamental principles, that of local self-government, is in question ; and in our great cities it has failed. This makes painfully significant and ominous the rapid and inevitable growth of our cities.

We have for years relied upon the country vote to hold the cities in check, but the time is soon coming when the cities will take matters into their own hands. If the rate of growth from 1880 to 1890 continues, in 1920 the cities of the United States will contain 10,000,000 more than one-half of the population. The city will then control State and nation. What if the city is then incapable of self-government ?

The greater part of our population must live in cities—cities much greater than the world has yet seen—cities which by their preponderance of numbers and of wealth must inevitably control civilization and destiny ; and we must learn—though we have not yet learned—to live in cities with safety to our health, our morals, and our liberties.

When great populations are massed together there are multiplied relations whose harmony must be preserved. A mistake is farther reaching ; it has a longer leverage. If, therefore, the people are to govern, they must be made better acquainted with the principles of government as population and municipal problems increase. And a higher morality is even more essential. As civilization becomes more complex, the division of labor becomes more minute, and the individual becomes more fractional and dependent. Under such conditions it is increasingly important that men should be dependable. More complicated relations require a more delicate conscience and a stronger sense of justice, for under them any failure in character or conduct is farther reaching and more disastrous in its results.

The problem of the twentieth century city, therefore, demands for its solution a higher type of citizenship, for which we must look chiefly to those who direct the education of the

young. Evidently our public schools must give to the children and youth of to-day such instruction in the duties and principles of good citizenship as earlier generations did not have. Literature dealing with American citizenship, adapted to all ages, from the high school down to the kindergarten, should be absorbed by the scholars until an intelligent civic patriotism becomes a matter of course.

We dare not rely on campaigns of enthusiasm ; it is still true that eternal vigilance is the price of liberty. If tidal waves come, they also go. If our liberties are to be secure, patriotism must be, not a mere impulse, but a fixed principle, rooted in the heart, informing the mind and inspiring the life.

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